

SHORT TAKES

E-bus charging stations at 4 depots

New Delhi: The Delhi transport department has approved setting up big electric bus charging infrastructure at four of its depots in Dwarka to cater for the needs of its expanding fleet of such vehicles in the national capital. The project, which is estimated to cost the exchequer ₹107 crore, is likely to be completed within 18 months as the government plans to replace its entire bus fleet to promote sustainable urban mobility. “The government of Delhi has decided to replace the existing fleet of CNG buses of DTC and cluster scheme to electric buses in a phased manner, and a charging infrastructure is required for it,” the minutes of the expenditure and finance panel meeting said. — PTI

Man wanted in rape cases held after 2 yrs

New Delhi: Delhi Police has arrested a 51-year-old man for allegedly raping his daughter-in-law and teenage daughter in New Delhi’s Gole Market, an official said on Wednesday. The accused, whose identity has been withheld to protect the victims, was evading arrest for over two and a half years, and was declared a proclaimed offender in cases registered at Paharganj and Alipur police stations, he said. “The first case dates back to 2018 when the accused was booked under sections 376 (rape), 343 (wrongful confinement), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the IPC at Paharganj Police Station after his daughter-in-law accused him of rape,” DCP (crime) Harsh Indora said.

Bail to attempt to murder accused

New Delhi: A court here has granted anticipatory bail to an attempt to murder and extortion accused, saying the sword of impending arrest cannot be kept hanging on him indefinitely. Additional sessions judge Vipul Dabass was hearing the plea of Dilbag Singh, booked in cases at Samaypur Badli Police Station. In an order dated May 2, the court said,

IAS OFFICER RAJ NAMED AS CM GUPTA’S SECY

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 7

Two weeks after his appointment as secretary to UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath, IAS officer Kaushal Raj has been named as Delhi chief minister Rekha Gupta’s secretary. The 2006-batch bureaucrat, who was named Mr Yogi’s secretary on April 22, was earlier posted as DM and divisional commissioner of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Varanasi Lok Sabha seat. The Union home ministry had recently given approval to send Mr Sharma on Central deputation for three years. His appointment will ensure a close monitoring of developmental projects in the national capital. During his previous tenure in Varanasi, he had undertaken several development projects to make the city clean, apart from some big infrastructure and tourism initiatives. After serving as DM of Varanasi, he was transferred to Prayagraj. Mr Sharma, who hails from Haryana, was included in the list of top 50 IAS officers in 2020.



Kaushal Raj

■ Terrorists will think 100 times before acting again: Lt. Narwal’s father ■ ‘Had faith in Modi’s decision’
‘Ops Sindoor is justice’: Bereaved families

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA NEW DELHI, MAY 7

A sense of satisfaction and relief was collectively shared by families of Pahalgam terror attack victims, after the Indian armed forces carried out missile strikes “Operation Sindoor” “on nine terror targets in Pakistan and P a k i s t a n - O c c u p i e d Kashmir (PoK).

Retaliating against the April 22 terror attack, in which 26 people were killed in south Kashmir’s Pahalgam town, the Indian armed forces hit the Jaish-e-Mohammad stronghold of Bahawalpur and Lashkar-e-Taiba’s base in Muridke, among other terror targets.

“Terrorists will think 100 times before acting again,” said Rajesh Narwal, father of Lt. Vinay Narwal, hailing India’s response. “I had said that such a thing (retaliatory strikes) has to be done so that no one dares to do such a cowardly act again...The strikes carried out on the terror targets will resonate in their minds forever,” Mr Narwal said.

Married about three weeks ago, Narwal (26), accompanied by his wife

Strike honoured women who lost husbands, say Maha victims kin

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, MAY 7

The family members of the Pahalgam victims in Maharashtra have hailed “Operation Sindoor”, saying the name of the operation was respectful of the women, calling the operation a justice and said it honoured women, who lost their husbands in the Pahalgam terror attacks.

“The name of the operation is ‘Sindoor’ and I think it was named this

Himanshi, was on a honeymoon trip to Pahalgam when terrorists shot him at point-blank range.

Family members of Indian Air Force Corporal Taje Hailyang, who was among those killed in the attack, hailed the Army’s operation against the terror bases, said it is time the government dismantled all terror networks so that no other family suffers what they are going through.

Charo Kamhwa Taje, the grieving wife of Corporal Hailyang, expressed both sorrow and determination, as she

way to respect women like my mother,” said Kunal Ganbote, the son of Pune resident Kaustubh Ganbote who was killed in the Pahalgam terror attack.

“I got tears in my eyes. It’s a fitting reply to how the terrorists erased the vermilion of our daughters. I sincerely thank the government,” Pragati Jagdale, wife of slain victim Santosh Jagdale, said, adding she was emotional after learning the name of the operation.

called upon the Indian government to intensify its crackdown on terror: “We have lost a beloved son of the soil. My husband could have fled the incident spot. But being a soldier, he died while helping others to escape,” she said, while endorsing full support to “Operation Sindoor”.

Pahalgam terror attack victim Shubham Dwivedi’s wife Ashanya thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the armed forces for taking “revenge” on her husband’s death. Ms Ashanya also said PM Modi has

kept his promise of pursuing the attackers and their backers “to the ends of the earth”. “Indian armed forces action has sent a clear message to the world that India will hunt the terrorists and their supporters down and will punish them,” she said.

Kajalben Parmar from Bhavnagar in Gujarat, who lost her husband Yashish Parmar and their son Smit in the terror attack, urged the government to continue action against Pakistan till it is wiped out.

Sumathi, the mother of Manjunath Rao from Shivamogga in Karnataka who was killed in Pahalgam, said she did not want her son’s “sacrifice” to go to waste. “We had faith that Modi will make the right decision. Nothing should happen to innocents, but those who try to oppress or indulge in rogue actions against us should not be spared. My son’s sacrifice should not go to waste,” she said.

“The name, ‘Operation Sindoor’ is correct as they have removed the ‘tilak’ of many women. That’s a good step. Government has done a good job,” father of another victim Bharath Bhushan said.

BJP, AAP, Cong hail strike; ‘Bharat mata ki jai’: Gupta

AVINASH PRABHAKAR NEW DELHI, MAY 7

The leaders of the BJP, the AAP and the Congress in Delhi hailed “Operation Sindoor” after India’s targeted strikes on terror camps in Pakistan and PoK early on Wednesday.

Delhi chief minister Rekha Gupta posted “Bharat Mata Ki Jai” on her X handle, sharing a poster of Operation Sindoor.

“I salute the Indian armed forces and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as their decision and decisive power has honoured the 140 crore Indians. Operation Sindoor has provided justice to the women who lost their spouses and given satisfaction to the entire country after the ‘soul-stirring’ killings of the innocent people by terrorists in Pahalgam. Our government and the Army will not spare anyone if they harass India,” the chief

I salute the Indian armed forces and PM Narendra Modi, as their decision and decisive power has honoured the 140 crore Indians. Operation Sindoor has provided justice to the women who lost their spouses

— Rekha Gupta, Delhi CM

minister said.

Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva said, “It is the pinnacle of our armed forces’ valour that in such a large-scale operation like Operation Sindoor, the Air Force destroyed all its pre-designated terrorist targets without making a single error that could harm any civilian.”

The AAP supremo and former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal lauded the swift and decisive response by India’s armed forces.

He said, “Proud of our

brave soldiers. Armed forces’ courage is the foundation of every Indian’s faith. We stand united in the fight against terrorism.”

Delhi Congress chief Devender Yadav said, “Operation Sindoor by the Indian armed forces gives a befitting reply to terrorists for their attacks on tourists at Pahalgam. Our forces are very strong and capable of crushing terrorists who try to disturb peace and harmony in the country.”

Delhi minister Kapil Mishra said, “India will no longer remain silent, and every terror hideout will face the consequences. Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has the trust of 140 crore Indians because he did what he said.”

BJP MP Manoj Tiwari said the attackers in the Pahalgam terror attack asked victims to tell PM Modi, and now he has responded.

■ Teams keeping vigil at key city locations & social media

Security upped, more cops deployed

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 7

In the wake of “Operation Sindoor” — strike by Indian armed forces against the terror bases in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK) — security in the national capital has been intensified, with additional police personnel and paramilitary forces deployed at city key locations.

A senior police officer said the national capital was already on high alert, as multiple agencies carried out mock security drills starting at 4 pm. “We have deployed more security personnel at key locations. The Delhi police is fully alert, and no one will be allowed to breach law and order. Teams are keeping strict vigil on vital locations and monitoring social media platforms,”



Security personnel keep vigil outside the Pakistan high commission in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

the officer said.

The officer added that additional security forces at vital areas like New Delhi, Central Delhi, North Delhi, South Delhi, Southwest Delhi’s cantonment area and the IGIA, have been deployed and senior officers are personally monitoring security

arrangements.

The police has increased day-and-night patrolling across different areas in the city, with a special focus on tourist and market places. Special patrol units have been mobilised to cover key areas, including Connaught Place, India Gate, Janpath,

Yashwant Palace, Gole Market and other vital installations.

“With security as a top priority, and to ensure the safety of citizens and maintain public security, police teams have intensified vehicle inspections at key entry and exit points. This proactive measure aims to deter and prevent any potential terror-related threats. We request the cooperation of all residents and commuters during this time,” said the police officer.

Authorities in Delhi will carry out mock drills at 55 locations in the city at 4 pm as part of the nationwide civil defence exercise “Operation Abhyaas” directed by the Centre.

The drill will simulate multiple hostile scenarios like air raids, multiple fire emergencies, and search and rescue operations.

Mega civil defence drills test India’s emergency readiness

Delhi goes dark, exercise held across 300 districts

SANJAY KAW NEW DELHI, MAY 7

Mock drills simulating multiple hostile scenarios, like air raids, fire emergencies, and search and rescue operations, were carried out in several states and Union territories on Wednesday as part of the nationwide mega civil defence mock drill “Operation Abhyaas”.

The drills took place a few hours after the Indian military launched Operation Sindoor, targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan and PoK in a strong response to the terror attack in Pahalgam.

Training of civilians in the event of hostile attacks, provision of crash blackout measures, early camouflaging of vital installations, verifying the response of civil defence services, and evaluating the preparedness of evacuation plans and their execution were also noted to be examined during the drill.

Close to 300 “civil defence districts” across the country with sensitive installations like nuclear plants, military bases, refineries, and hydroelectric dams were covered by mock drills on air-raid warning sirens, civilian



A National Disaster Response Force official during a mega civil defence mock drill in New Delhi on Wednesday. — G.N. JHA

training for a “hostile attack,” and cleaning of bunkers and trenches. The drill was carried out in a maximum of 32 districts in West Bengal, followed by 28 in Rajasthan, and 20 each in Assam, Punjab, and Jammu and Kashmir.

The drill at some places began with a simulated explosion, followed by a fire. The civil defence volunteers were the first to respond, quickly cordoning off the area. Soon after, fire brigade personnel arrived to douse the flames, followed by paramedics who attended to the “injured” and rushed them to nearby hospitals.

In national capital, the New Delhi Municipal Council also announced

(NDMC) a blackout from 8-8.15 pm across Lutyens’ Delhi. The blackout drill did not involve hospitals, dispensaries, Rashtrapati Bhawan, PMO, metro stations and other important establishments.

PCR vans and fire engines were stationed at multiple locations.

At Khan Market, alarm sirens were played and people were asked to run as part of the evacuation drill that was carried out.

Some of the prominent locations where the mock drill was conducted also include Connaught Place and Chandni Chowk. In Chandni Chowk, a mock drill was carried out in the presence of civil defence volunteers.

Take steps to enact Advocate Protection Bill, HC urges govt

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 7

The Delhi high court recently urged the Delhi government to promptly take further steps to enact the Advocates Protection Bill in Delhi.

The court was told that, according to a status report filed by the Delhi government’s law department in September 2024, the final draft of the Delhi Advocates Protection Bill was pending, and consideration by the council of ministers in Delhi before a policy decision was taken on its enactment.

However, a copy of the draft was yet to be shared with the coordination committee of all district courts bar associations of Delhi. It, therefore, moved an application urging the court to direct the government to share a copy of the draft bill. Justice Sachin Datta had on April 21 ordered the

SC gives 1 week to Reliance Metro, DMRC to settle ₹2,500cr dispute

‘Will be bound to take coercive measures against officials’

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 7

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said it will wait for a week for the settlement of the dispute over refund of nearly ₹2,500 crore by Reliance Infrastructure subsidiary Delhi Airport Metro Express Private Limited (DAMEPL) and Axis Bank to the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), failing which the law will take its own course.

On March 3, the court said its verdict on the DMRC-DAMEPL dispute of last year needed to be followed in letter and spirit, or it will be bound to take coercive measures against the concerned officials of the private firm and Axis Bank.

The Axis Bank has submitted that it was not party to the dispute for six years, and now suddenly it was receiving a contempt notice for payment. It said the bank was only

‘Casual manner’: SC upset with NLUs over setting law test papers

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 7

The Supreme Court expressed anguish over the “casual manner” in which the consortium of National Law Universities (NLUs) was framing questions for the common law admission test (CLAT).

A bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and Augustine George Masih said, “At the outset, we must express our anguish at the casual manner in which the respondent number

operating the escrow account in the dispute.

Attorney-general R. Venkataramani, appearing for the DMRC, said that all the earlier orders were passed against Axis Bank, and it cannot be said that they were not aware of the proceedings.

one (consortium) has been framing the questions for the CLAT examination, which involves the career aspirations of lakhs of students.”

It pointed out mistakes related to some of the questions in the CLAT UG-2025. It was hearing a plea filed by an aspirant challenging the Delhi high court’s April 23 verdict. It had earlier directed the consortium to revise marksheets and republish the final list within four weeks.

The SC had asked Venkataramani to collate the names of the persons and their positions, saying the court will take coercive action, if the need arises. The dispute relates to the operation of the Airport Metro line undertaken by DAMEPL.

Cabinet nod to cloud-seeding trials to combat air pollution

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 7

The Delhi Cabinet on Wednesday approved the cloud-seeding trials to combat persistent air pollution in the national capital. In a meeting chaired by chief minister Rekha Gupta, the Cabinet approved a proposal “Technology Demonstration and Evaluation of Cloud Seeding as an Alternative for Delhi NCR” to conduct five cloud-seeding trials to

tackle the pollution and water scarcity challenges.

The Cabinet also expressed deepest condolences to the families of the victims and hailed the successful execution of “Operation Sindoor” by the Indian armed forces.

Talking about the Cabinet decision, Delhi environment minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa said each cloud-seeding trial will cost ₹55 lakhs, with a total estimated expenditure of ₹2.75 crore

for the five trials.

Additionally, there will be a one-time setup cost of Rs 66 lakhs to cover aircraft calibration, chemical storage, logistics, and other preparatory arrangements. The total project outlay stands at Rs 3.21 crore.

The first trial is scheduled for late May-June 2025, subject to clearances, and will cover an area of approximately 100 square kilometres, primarily on the outskirts of Delhi.

Israel supports India, China voices ‘regret’

■ Continued from Page 1

India’s diplomatic offensive following “Operation Sindoor”, foreign secretary Vikram Misri briefed the UN Security Council (UNSC) member nations, barring Pakistan, in the national capital. In all, 13 envoys, including Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong, were briefed. Sierra Leone, a non-permanent UNSC member, does not have a mission in Delhi.

In response to a question on potential Pakistani retaliation, Mr Misri told the foreign envoys that India will respond if Pakistan attacks civilian infrastructure in

India in the coming days.

Supporting New Delhi’s actions, Israeli ambassador to India Reuven Azar was quoted as stating, “Israel supports India’s right to self-defence. Terrorists should know there’s no place to hide from their heinous crimes against the innocent.”

Hours after India launched Operation Sindoor, US secretary of state Marco Rubio urged the national security advisers (NSAs) of both India and Pakistan to keep lines of communication open and avoid escalation, his office said on Wednesday. US President Donald Trump said he hopes that

the hostilities will end “very quickly”. “It’s a shame”, he was quoted by news agency reports, adding, “We heard about it just as we were walking in the doors of the Oval (office). I guess people knew something was going to happen based on a little bit of the past.”

The US President was further quoted as saying, “They’ve been fighting for a long time. They’ve been fighting for many, many decades and centuries, actually, if you really think about it.” Asked if he has any message for the countries, he said, “No, I just hope it ends very quickly”

China, meanwhile, called on India and Pakistan to exercise maximum restraint in the “larger interest of peace and stability” of the region and said it will play a “constructive role” in easing the tensions by working with the international community.

China’s foreign ministry was quoted by reports as stating that China opposes all forms of terrorism, in an apparent reference to the Pahalgam terrorist attack that killed 26 people.

Russia expressed deep concern at the escalation of military confrontation between India and Pakistan in the

wake of the Pahalgam terror attack. “We are deeply concerned about the intensifying military confrontation between India and Pakistan after the terrorist attack near the city of Pahalgam,” Russia foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova was quoted by state-run news agency TASS.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the UK is engaging with both India and Pakistan to push for dialogue and de-escalation.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres too called for “maximum military restraint” from India and Pakistan.

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SHORT TAKES

Modi's 3-nation trip to Europe called off

New Delhi: The government sources on Wednesday confirmed that the planned visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi next week to the three European nations of Croatia, Norway and the Netherlands has now been put off in view of the tensions with Pakistan and the launch of "Operation Sindoor" by India against terror targets on Wednesday in Pakistan. The PM was to have visited the three nations from May 13 to 17 but his presence in the country at all times is now required. The three nations have been told about the cancellation of the visit for now and it may be postponed to a later date after the situation stabilises in the weeks to come.

NIA: Share info on Pahalgam attack

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency has appealed to all tourists, visitors and local people who might have any more information, photographs or videos relating to the Pahalgam terror attack on tourists to immediately contact the agency. The agency has already taken possession of a sizable number of photographs and videos showing various aspects of the attack and is examining the same.

Pahalgam mastermind in Pak's Rawalpindi

■ **Continued from Page 1**
Kashmiri face of the local Punjabi-dominated LeT, Gul was educated in Srinagar and did his MBA in Bangalore, later pivoting to a lab technician course in Kerala. He returned to Jammu and Kashmir, where he opened a diagnostic lab and started providing logistical support to the terror group. During his work as an overground worker (OGW) for the terror group, Gul was caught by the Delhi police special cell in 2002 at Nizamuddin Railway Station with 5 kg of RDX. It was revealed that he was conducting reconnoitering targets and conspiring to conduct serial blasts in the national capital, for which he was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment on August 7, 2003. He moved to Pakistan after his release from prison in 2017, where the ISI chose him to lead the TRF in Kashmir in 2019 to give it a facade of an indigenous terror movement of J&K. The creation of TRF was a strategy of the ISI in the aftermath of the Pulwama incident in February 2019, when Pakistan had come to the adverse notice of the world for sponsoring and harbouring terror outfits like LeT and JeM and was facing scrutiny for terror financing by FATE. Gul's brother, a former doctor in Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital, Srinagar, was also a terrorist in the 1990s who had migrated to Saudi Arabia and later to Pakistan, where he is now involved in terror funding with fugitives in Gulf countries.

India strikes at 9 targets

■ **Continued from Page 1**
The civilians in the border areas are being evacuated to safer locations. As tension escalated, around 27 dual-use (civilian and military) airports in northern, western and central India were closed, which also impacted domestic as well as international flights. Social media showed videos in which the Pakistan Army was seen evacuating villages bordering India in Muzaffarabad (PoK) late on Wednesday night. Reports also claimed that the Pakistani authorities had issued orders for maintaining a blackout in several areas across Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Soon after the strikes, national security adviser Ajit Doval briefed his counterparts in the United States, Britain, Russia, Japan and Saudi Arabia on "Operation Sindoor". He spoke to US secretary of state Marco Rubio, currently the acting NSA there, as well as Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi and French President Emmanuel Macron's diplomatic adviser. Mr Doval told his interlocutors that India has no intention of escalating tensions, but "is prepared to retaliate resolutely if Pakistan does so". Foreign secretary Vikram Misri said India decided to carry out the "proportionate" strikes to bring the perpetrators and planners of the April 22 Pahalgam attack to justice as there was "no demonstrable step" from Pakistan to act against terrorist infrastructure on the territories under its control. "The Indian armed forces are fully prepared

Dread returns to LoC villages as Pak rains artillery

Dozens of families take shelter in underground bunkers, safer location

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, MAY 7

As dread returns to Jammu and Kashmir border areas following Pakistan rains artillery that killed and injured scores of civilians and left a trail of destruction over the hillside hamlets overnight, dozens of families have taken shelter in the underground bunkers. Many more have fled to safer locations, living with either their relatives or friends now.

Amid roaring of a variety of howitzers and 81mm and 120mm mortars, the border-dwellers including women and children were seen running out of their homes to evade death. Some of them reached over by this newspaper through their mobile phones said that they witnessed artillery shells fired from across the Line of Control (LoC) falling and exploding in the middle of frightened civilian populations. "Hell was let loose and

States should be prepared as per mock drill norms: Shah

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 7

On the day, India hit targets deep inside Pakistan, the Centre issued a clear direction to the States and Union territories to keep track on anti-national propaganda unleashed on social media and other platforms, and ensure strict action is taken against them in coordination with the central agencies. At a meeting of chief ministers, chief secretaries and director general police of states bordering with Pakistan and Nepal, home minister Amit Shah said that all states should make their preparations as per the guidelines issued for the mock drill. He said that arrangements should be made for smooth operation of essential services like hospitals; fire brigade etc. and uninterrupted supply of essential goods should be ensured. The meeting was attended via video conferencing also by the lieutenant-governors of J&K and Ladakh, CMs of UP, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and West Bengal, and a representative from the Sikkim government. Senior officials from the Union home ministry, including the Union home secretary, intelligence bureau's director, director generals of BSF, and CISF.



Injured people being treated at a hospital after alleged heavy firing and shelling by Pakistan military overnight across the Line of Control and International Border, at Uri in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla on Wednesday. At least three civilians were killed and ten injured in the incident.

the whole village was covered with smoke as a few houses and shrubs caught fire after being hit by shells," said Muzaffar Ahmed, a resident of Karnah (Kupwara district). The villagers were being readied for evacuation to safer locations when

reports last came in. In various areas falling in proximity of the LoC and International Border (IB), the residents have taken refuge in the household-level shelters or moved in the village-shared shelters capable of accommodating multiple families. Often

Pro-Pakistan social media spreading fake news: Govt

SHASHI BHUSHAN
NEW DELHI, MAY 7

India on Wednesday said, following its decisive strike under "Operation Sindoor", Pakistan has unleashed a full-blown disinformation offensive — a desperate attempt to shift the focus and control the narrative with a barrage of lies and digital theatrics. To counter the Pakistani propaganda, on one side the Centre has blocked social media accounts spreading fake news about "Operation Sindoor" and debunked their claims with facts throughout the day. "What started as a focused and effective military operation by the

Indian forces has now spiraled into a chaotic online propaganda war. Pro-Pakistan social media handles and even influential political figures are deliberately spreading fake news, fabricating stories of miraculous military victories and heroic retaliation," an official said. Sources pointed out that in a blatant effort to hijack the narrative and distract from the reality on the ground, Pakistan's state-affiliated accounts have turned to their familiar playbook: recycling outdated images, misrepresenting old videos, and inventing completely fabricated claims. "Their goal is clear — to flood the information

referred to as 'bunkers', these were constructed between zero to three kilometres from the LoC and the IB or Jammu-Sialkot border when the facing armies would, prior to the two countries renewing the November 2003 ceasefire agreement in February 2021, routinely engage in skirmishes. In the Uri sector of the neighbouring Baramulla district, several people were injured when their homes at Salamabad, Parantina, Basgran, Gungal, Dachi and Lagama were either deliberately pounded from across the de factor order or, as per their belief, the shells fired by the Pakistani troops to target Indian forward positions landed in their homes or exploded close to these. When the shelling stopped at daybreak Wednesday, a few families fled to take shelter in the homes of their relatives or friends beyond the "danger zone".

space with falsehoods so quickly and overwhelmingly that it becomes difficult to separate fact from fiction." "This is not just misinformation; it is a calculated, coordinated campaign designed to distort reality, mislead the public, and manipulate perceptions across the region," they said. In one such example is a viral image falsely claiming that the Pakistan Army had shot down an Indian Rafale jet near Bahawalpur. Debunking the claim, the PIB Fact Check said that image was actually from a MiG-21 crash in Moga, Punjab, in 2021 and entirely unrelated to current events.

Forces kill 22 Naxals, closes in on Hidma

Karregutta op enters 17th day ■ 4 choppers, 2 drone squadrons deployed

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUHDURY
RAIPUR, MAY 7

At least 22 Maoists were on Wednesday gunned down in the Karregutta hills along the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border where a massive anti-Naxal operation involving 24,000 security personnel has been launched since April 21 to flush out the ultras holed up in the forested area. On the 17th day of the counterinsurgency operation in Karregutta hills, code named Mission Sankalp, on Wednesday, security forces came face to

face with the Maoists while cordoning off some Naxal hideouts in the area, leading to a fierce encounter, a senior police officer told this newspaper, unwilling to be quoted. Sources disclosed to this newspaper that dreaded Maoist Hidma Madvi, a Central Committee (CC) member of the outlawed CPI (Maoist), and Barsa Deva, commander of the battalion number one, the most dangerous military formation of the Naxals, were believed to be holed up along with their armed squads in their bunker hideouts in the hills that

■ **SECURITY FORCES came face to face with the Maoists while cordoning off some Naxal hideouts in the area, leading to a fierce encounter**
came under the target of the security forces in the morning, leading to the encounter. "Twenty-two bodies of Naxals have been recovered so far. The anti-Naxal operation is underway", Chhattisgarh chief minister Vishnu Deo said. "Further details are still awaited", police said. With



People burst firecrackers and wave the tricolour as they hail "Operation Sindoor", in Prayagraj on Wednesday. Indian armed forces carried out missile strikes on terror targets in Pakistan and PoK in retaliation for the Pahalgam terror attack.

Moonwalk by '40, space station by 2035, vows Modi

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 7

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said that India was marching ahead with renewed confidence in the field of space exploration and declared that by 2040, an Indian astronaut would leave footprints on the Moon. Addressing the Global Conference on Space Exploration (GLEXP) 2025 via videoconferencing, the Prime Minister stressed that Mars and Venus were also on the country's radar for exploration missions. Prime Minister Mr Modi said that for India, space was about exploration as well as empowerment, and listed out plans to set up the Bharatiya Antariksh Station by 2035 and land an Indian astronaut on the Moon by 2040. "India's space journey is not about racing others. It is about reaching higher together. Together, we

■ **INDIA'S SPACE journey is not about racing others. It is about reaching higher together. Together, we share a common goal to explore space for the good of humanity**
share a common goal to explore space for the good of humanity," he said, adding that India has launched a satellite for the South Asian nations and the G20 satellite, announced during its presidency of the grouping, will be a gift to the Global South. "Our first human space-flight mission, 'Gaganyaan', highlights our nation's rising aspirations," the Prime Minister said referring to the mission planned for early 2027 launch. He declared that in the coming weeks, an Indian astronaut will travel to space as part of a joint Isro-Nasa Mission to the International Space Station.

Cabinet clears ₹11,829cr for 5 new IITs, IIT upgradation

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 7

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved expansion of academic and infrastructure capacity of five new Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) which were set up in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Karnataka. The Cabinet also approved the scheme for Industrial Training Institute (ITI) upgradation and the setting up of five centres of excellence for skillling as a centrally sponsored scheme. The government said that the total cost for the proposed expansion of IITs is ₹11,828.79 crore over a period of four years from 2025-26 to 2028-29. "The Cabinet has approved creation of 130 faculty posts in these IITs. Five new state-of-art research parks are also coming up to strengthen industry-academia linkage," he government said.

CBI director Sood gets 1 yr extension

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 7

The Centre on Wednesday extended the tenure of CBI director Praveen Sood by one year. The appointments committee of the Cabinet, based on the recommendations of the selection committee, approved Mr Sood's extension for a period of one year beyond May 24, the government notification said. The decision to extend his tenure was taken in a meeting of the selection committee headed by

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and comprising Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday, officials said. The incumbent director took over office on May 25, 2023 for a two-year term. Mr Sood is a 1986-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Karnataka cadre. He was working as Karnataka's director general of police (DGP) when he was named as the director of the CBI.

Pak shelling kills 14 civilians

■ **Continued from Page 1**

IB opposite J&K. The Indian Army said that innocent civilians lost their lives in "indiscriminate" firing and shelling" by the Pakistan troops and that it is responding in a "proportionate manner". The worst hit was Poonch, where all the 12 to 14 deaths took place and scores of residential houses and other structures were damaged in the Pakistani shelling. The dead include two women, a minor brother-sister duo and two other children. The victims have been identified as Muhammad Zain Khan (10) and his sister Zoya Khan (12), Maryam Khatoun (7), Vihaan Bhargav (13), Balvinder Kour alias Ruby (33), Shakeela Bi (40), Muhammad Akram (40), Amrik Singh (55), Muhammad Iqbal (45), Ranjeet Singh (48), ex-Army official Amarjeet Singh (47), Muhammad Rafi (40). However, a report put the death toll at 14, identifying two other victims as Muhammad Adil and Saleem Hussain, who were caught in the cross-border shelling in Sagra and Balakot villages of the Mendhar area of Poonch, respectively. The other deaths took place mainly in the Poonch city, which is located about 8 km south of the LoC and its neighbourhood. The Army sources said that the Pakistani troops initially fired artillery in the Bhimber Gali (pass) in the Poonch-Rajouri region. Then the ceasefire violation escalated with shelling spreading to other areas along the LoC, including Akhnoor, Sunderbani, Naushera, Uri and Karnah-Keran and in the Pargwal sector of the IB. The shelling has been particu-

larly intense in areas like Chanakan-da-Bagh (near Poonch city), Krishna Ghati, Shahpur, Gulpar, Kerni, Mankote, Mendhar and Laam, the sources added. Reports said that most of the deaths took place when the victims' homes were hit by shells. A witness told this newspaper over the phone from Poonch that one of the artillery shells landed on the campus of Jamia Zia Ul Uloom Islamic seminary, killing a teacher Muhammad Iqbal. He died of shrapnel wounds, he said. A J&K forest department officer and several stationary vehicles at the local bus stand were also damaged while an artillery shell fell just outside the field office of the United Nations Military Observers Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). The UNMOGIP is a peacekeeping mission established in 1949 to monitor and report any development in connection with the military situation and to investigate alleged ceasefire violations along the LoC. The Uri sector of Baramulla district and Karnah-Keran in neighbouring Kupwara also saw private homes and other properties, including a mosque, being hit in the artillery shelling, leaving more than 15 residents injured and a trail of destruction over the scattered hillside villages. Reports said that 11 people, including four children and Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) constable Manoj Kumar, were injured after Pakistani shells landed in civilian areas such as Salamabad, Kalgie and Gungal. At least 23 civilian structures, including 16 residential houses and seven vehicles, were damaged when hit by shells.

'Response measured, non-escalatory'

■ **Continued from Page 1**

latest actions should be seen in the context of the recent UN Security Council's (UNSC) call to "hold perpetrators, organisers, financiers and sponsors of this (Pahalgam attack) reprehensible act of terrorism accountable and bring them to justice." At the briefing, Mr Misri said, "A group calling itself The Resistance Front (TRF) has claimed responsibility for the attack. This group is a front for the UN-proscribed Pakistani terrorist group, Lashkar-e-Tayyaba. It is notable that India had given inputs about the TRF in the half-yearly report to the Monitoring Team of the UN's 1267 Sanctions Committee in May and November 2024, bringing out its role as a cover for Pakistan-based terrorist groups. Earlier too, in December 2023, India had informed the monitoring team about LeT and Jaish-e-Mohammad operating through small terror groups such as the TRF. Pakistan's pressure to remove references to TRF in the April 25 UN Security Council press statement is notable in this regard." The foreign secretary said that "investigations into the terror attack have brought out the communication nodes of terrorists in and to Pakistan". He said the "claims made by TRF and their reposting by known social media handles of the LeT speak for

themselves", adding that "our intelligence has developed an accurate picture of the planners and backers of this team" that carried out the Pahalgam terror attacks". Meanwhile, a rattled Pakistan said it "reserves the right to respond appropriately at a time and place of its choosing" and condemned India's strikes against terror targets and claimed that civilians had been killed in a "blatant act of war" by India that used "standoff weapons" to violate Pakistan's sovereignty from Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft "within Indian airspace". Islamabad also raised the nuclear bogey by claiming that "India's reckless action has brought the two nuclear-armed states closer to a major conflict". Addressing the media, Mr Misri further said, "The attack in Pahalgam was marked by extreme barbarity, with the victims mostly killed with head shots from close range and in front of their families. Family members were deliberately traumatised through the manner of the killing, accompanied by the exhortation that they should take back the message. The attack was clearly driven by the objective of undermining the normalcy returning to Jammu & Kashmir. In particular, it was designed to impact the mainstay of the economy, tourism, with a record 23 million tourists visiting the valley

last year." Mr Misri added: "The calculation, presumably, was that harming growth and development in the Union territory will help keep it backward and create fertile ground for continued cross-border terrorism from Pakistan." "The manner of the attack was also driven by an objective of provoking communal discord, both in Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of the nation. It is to the credit of the government and the people of India that these designs were foiled." "The features of this attack also tie in with Pakistan's long track record of perpetrating cross-border terror in India, which is well documented and beyond question. Pakistan also has a well-deserved reputation as a haven for terrorists from around the world, with internationally proscribed terrorists enjoying impunity there, the foreign secretary said, adding, "In addition, Pakistan has been known to wilfully mislead the world and international forums, such as the Financial Action Task Force, on this issue..." "Despite a fortnight having passed since the attacks, there has been no demonstrable step from Pakistan to take action against the terrorist infrastructure on its territory or on territory under its control. Instead, all it has indulged in are denials and allegations," the foreign secretary said.

SHORT TAKES

Pawar greets Modi, Uddhav credits Army

Mumbai: NCP(SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Wednesday congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi and defence minister Rajnath Singh for destroying terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. While Mr Pawar supported the government, his alliance partner Uddhav Thackeray's response was measured. In a statement, he credited the Army for 'Operation Sindoor'. In a post on X, the NCP founder said, "Spoke with PMO and Raksha Mantri. Congratulated the efforts of the Indian Armed Forces and commended them for the action taken. We reiterated our support to the government during this challenging time." Earlier in the day, speaking with the reporters in Pune, Mr Pawar, who had served as the Union defence minister in 1990, said that the killings of innocent tourists last month created an atmosphere of unrest.

Celebrations in MP, C'garh after strikes

Bhopal: Two central Indian states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh on Wednesday erupted in celebrations over the pre-dawn missile strikes targeting terrorists' hideouts in Pakistan and Pak-occupied Kashmir (PoK) by India. People irrespective of caste, creed, religion and gender poured into the streets to celebrate the occasion by distributing sweets, waving the tricolour, raising slogans in praise of the army and offering prayers in temples seeking blessings for the jawans. In Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain, "sindoor" (vermillion) and tricolour were offered to the jyotirlinga in the Mahakaleshwar temple by priests praying for blessings for the jawans. In Indore, all eateries in the famed "56 dukan (shops)" offered sweets and other food items free of cost to visitors in the morning as a mark of celebration.

Cong halts events in solidarity with forces

New Delhi: The Congress on Wednesday paused all scheduled party programmes, including the "Samvidhan Bachao" rallies, in solidarity with the armed forces. The decision was made at the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting chaired by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and attended by Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, party general secretaries Jairam Ramesh, K.C. Venugopal and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, among others. Indian armed forces struck at the core of Pakistan's terror infrastructure in a series of precision attacks after midnight. Indian jets hit training camps, launch pads and headquarters of the Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba without breaching Pakistan's airspace, officials said. — PTI

'ISRO TO LAUNCH 52 SPY SATS OVER NEXT 5 YRS'

New Delhi, May 7: India is stepping up its space-based surveillance capabilities by putting in orbit a constellation of 52 satellites over the next five years with a strong participation from the private sector, the top boss of a key nodal agency has said. "We have fairly strong capabilities already. It is just that it needs constant enhancement," Pawan Kumar Goenka, chairman, Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre said on the sidelines of the Global Space Exploration Conference-2025. Mr Goenka said over the next five years, 52 satellites will be launched to increase the surveillance capabilities for the defence sector. "So far, this was primarily done by Isro, we will bring in the private sector as we move forward to enhance surveillance capabilities," he said. The satellites will help the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force, track enemy movements, monitor borders, and improve real-time coordination during military operations. "The private sector will deliver half of the 52 satellites, while the rest will be built by Isro," he said. Mr Goenka made it clear that decisions to further enhance the surveillance capabilities will have to be taken by the Union home ministry and the defence forces. — PTI

Nari Shakti takes centre stage after op

■ Col. Sofiya and Wing Cdr Vyomika lead briefing on 'Sindoor' ■ Modi himself suggested codename: Sources

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, MAY 7

In a befitting response to women widowed in the Pahalgam massacre, "Nari Shakti" was on display on Wednesday as India chose for the first time to field its two women officers — Col. Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Cdr Vyomika Singh — to lead an official press briefing on "Operation Sindoor" and to relay a powerful message on women's power and secular fabric of the country.

Along with the name "Operation Sindoor", the choice of women officers sent a strong message globally.

Sources said the logo of "Operation Sindoor", signifying the spiritual divine energy destined to control evil forces, was designed in 45 minutes, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself suggested the codename

aimed at avenging the brutal killing of civilians, a few of them couples celebrating their wedding.

Interestingly, at the time when the airstrikes were underway, the ADGPI of the Indian Army at 1.28 am posted a video on social media, titled in Sanskrit "*Praharay Sannihitah, Jayay Prashikshitah*", meaning "ready to strike, trained to win", showing India's military power.

The two officers joined foreign secretary Vikram Misri in giving details about the precision strikes by the armed forces on nine terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, presenting a striking image of a combination of India's prowess in military and diplomacy.

Col. Qureshi from the Army's Corps of Signals and Wg Cdr Singh, a helicopter pilot, shared the



Foreign secretary Vikram Misri, Col. Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Cdr Vyomika Singh during a press conference regarding "Operation Sindoor" in New Delhi on Wednesday.

— PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

names and details of the sites targeted in the early hours on Wednesday in Hindi and English respectively.

"I, Col. Sofiya Qureshi, and along with me Wing Cdr Vyomika Singh, will today provide information

to you about Operation Sindoor carried out by the Indian armed forces from 1 am to 1:30 am on the intervening night of May 6-7, 2025," Col. Qureshi said as some visuals played on the screen, depicting sites, which

were targeted.

Wing Cdr Singh said the strikes on the terror camps were taken through "precision capabilities".

"Niche technology weapons with careful selection of warheads were ensured, so that there will be no collateral damage. The point of impact in each of the targets was a specific building or a group of buildings," the IAF officer said.

All the targets were "neutralised with clinical efficiency", and the results "reiterate the professionalism" of the Indian armed forces, in the planning and execution of their operations, she added, underlining that "no military establishments were targeted".

An accomplished helicopter pilot, Wing Cdr Vyomika, commissioned into the IAF in the year 2004, has flown the Chetak and the Cheetah helicop-

ters. Promoted to the rank of Wing Cdr in 2017, she has also been a trailblazer of sorts for women in the IAF and has operated from the high-altitude sectors in J&K to the remote areas in the Northeast. She is married to an IAF pilot.

In 2020, she led a rescue operation in Arunachal Pradesh, flying in extreme conditions to evacuate civilians.

Born in Vadodara in 1974, Col. Qureshi is a multi-generation officer in the Army and was commissioned in 1990 and is married to an Army officer.

She had been picked for the role of a military observer in Democratic Republic of Congo in 2006, and been part of flood relief operations in the Northeast region.

The Army officer became the first woman officer to lead its contingent at a multi-national field training exercise.

Centre calls all-party meet today, lauds forces

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 7

After the targeted strikes at terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), the government has called an all-party meeting on Thursday to brief them about "Operation Sindoor", carried out by the armed forces. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, meanwhile, chaired a meeting of the Union Cabinet, hours after "Operation Sindoor" was launched to destroy terror targets in Pakistan and PoK, and hailed the forces for the targeted strikes.

Soon after defence minister Rajnath Singh informed the Cabinet about the operation, the entire Cabinet hailed the action and the Prime Minister's leadership with thumping of desks.

It has been learnt that Mr Modi has said that his government will have "zero tolerance" towards terror. The Prime Minister also separately met Mr Singh and NSA Ajit Doval, and took stock of the evolving situation.

Meanwhile, in a post on X, parliamentary affairs minister Kiren Rijiju said, "Govt has called an All Party leaders meeting at 11 am on 8th May, 2025 at Committee Room: G-074, in the Parliament Library Building, Parliament Complex in New Delhi".

The Congress lauded the Indian armed forces for their bold and decisive step against terror camps under "Operation Sindoor" and reiterated the party's support to the forces and the government's action on the issue of security.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge said that his party extends all its support to the armed forces in ensuring the safety of the country and its unity and integrity.

"Congratulations to Indian soldiers for safeguarding the sovereignty of the country and securing its citizens by giving a befitting reply to the Pahalgam attack," NCP(SP) president Sharad Pawar said.

In a social media post, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee stated, "Jai Hind! Jai India!"

No intention of escalation: Doval briefs foreign NSAs

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 7

National security adviser Ajit Doval on Wednesday told his counterparts in various countries that India has no intent to escalate tensions but is prepared to "retaliate resolutely" if Pakistan does so.

Mr Doval briefed his counterparts in the US, the UK, Saudi Arabia and Japan about India's missile strikes against terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). He also established contact with Russia and France, officials said.

"The NSA briefed his counterparts on actions taken and method of execution, which was measured, non-escalatory and restrained. He emphasised that India had no intent to escalate but was well prepared to retaliate resolutely should Pakistan decide to escalate," an official said.

The conversations took place soon after India carried out "Operation Sindoor" at nine sites.

Indian, intl ops hit, over 250 flights cancelled 27 airports shut amid curbs after strikes in Pak and PoK

VINEETA PANDEY
NEW DELHI, MAY 7

A total of 27 airports in northern, central and western India have been temporarily closed for civilian flights and more than 250 flights have been cancelled in these sectors in the wake of the tense situation after the Indian forces hit nine terror locations in Pakistani and PoK under "Operation Sindoor".

The airports that have been shut for regular planes are Chandigarh, Srinagar, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Bhubhar, Kishangarh, Patiala, Shimla, Gaggal, Bhatinda, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Halwara, Pathankot, Leh, Jammu, Mundra, Jamnagar, Rajkot, Porbandar, Kandla, Keshod, Bhuj, Dharamsala, Gwalior and Hindon. Many of these are military airports and are used for civilian planes, and are located in border areas.

Both domestic and international airlines were severely impacted due to fireworks at the Indo-Pak border.

As per Flightradar24, which tracks airlines, there were 430 cancella-



Firefighters take part in a drill conducted amid rains as part of the nationwide civil defence exercise in Kochi on Wednesday.

— PTI

tions logged in India, which is three per cent of its scheduled flights, while 147 cancellations were reported in Pakistan, which is 17 per cent of its scheduled flights. The snapshot of airborne traffic over the conflict zone showed a clear airspace in the area as flights hovered around and crowded safe airports in India.

The Pakistani airspace had only two flights in the morning at 8.50 UTC, that too on the western side.

Many international airlines en route to northern India and Pakistan last night had to reroute mid-

way as an attack from India took place. Air India, IndiGo, Spicejet, Akasa and Air India Express also rerouted their late-night flights and later announced they are suspending operations in certain airports for the time being and offered rescheduling waivers or refund cancellations to affected passengers.

IndiGo said it has cancelled more than 165 flights from various domestic airports, including Amritsar and Srinagar, till early morning of May 10 due to airspace restrictions.

Beginning of justice: RSS 'Dharma protects one who protects dharma': BJP Opp. extols forces for 'bold, decisive' action

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 7

Leaders cutting across party lines on Wednesday lauded the armed forces for the successful execution of "Operation Sindoor" and expressed solidarity with the Central government for its swift action following the terrorist attack in Pahalgam.

The BJP hailed the airstrike at terror camps in Pakistan as a "dharma rakshati raksitah" (dharma protects the one who protects dharma) response by the Modi government to the Pahalgam terror attack. Saluting the bravery and patriotism of the armed forces, the

Congress said they have given a "bold and decisive response" to the terrorist attack and said the party stands shoulder to shoulder with the brave soldiers of the country.

The RSS, meanwhile, said "Operation Sindoor" was the beginning of justice for the Pahalgam victims.

The Congress Working Committee (CWC) also extended its "full support" to the Indian forces and their precise strikes at the terror hideouts deep inside Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) under "Operation Sindoor".

Following the meeting, Congress leader and



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi address the media after the Congress Working Committee meeting in New Delhi on Wednesday.

— PTI

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi addressed the media, saying, "We held discussions (on Operation Sindoor) in the Working

Committee. Full support to our forces. Best wishes to them. Much love to them. Complete support from the Congress and Congress Working

Committee." Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge also briefed the media about the CWC meeting, reiterating complete support to the Indian forces for giving a "befitting reply" to the terrorists.

Before the meeting, Mr Kharge said the Congress has "unequivocally" stood in solidarity with the armed forces and the government since the Pahalgam terrorist attack. BSP supreme Mayawati and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav lauded the armed forces.

Hailing India's action, the BJP leaders and supporters used the #DharmoRakshatiRaksita hashtag on social media.

TERROR TARGETS

1 Syedna Belal Camp, Muzaffarabad

The main centre of JeM in PoK, located opposite the Red Fort in Muzaffarabad. The JeM's office and transit camp is located on a first floor adjacent to the building of Syedna Bilal Masjid. This facility, spread over 8-10 kanals, has family quarters, office building and office of the Al-Rehmat Trust, the charity wing of JeM.

3 Subhan Allah, Bahawalpur

Around 100 km from IB, the JeM headquarters is the main centre of JeM for training and indoctrination of young people. It has houses of JeM chief Maulana Masood Azhar, de-facto JeM chief Mufti Abdul Rauf Asghar, Maulana Ammar and other family members. The perpetrators of the Pulwama attack were trained at this camp.

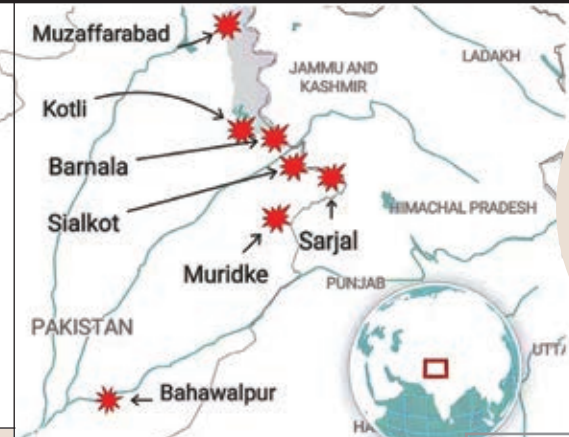
2 Sawai Nala Camp, Muzaffarabad

A key LeT training facility is located in PoK, 30 km from on line of control in Tangdhar Sector.

The attack on civilians and security forces in Sonmarg on October 20, 2024, Gulmarg on October 24, 2024 and Pahalgam attack on April 22, 25 were carried out by the terror module which had its germination at Sawai Nala.

4 Gulpur Camp, Kotli

The base for LeT terrorists operating in Rajauri-Poonch is located 30 km from the line of control. Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, the 26/11 master mind, frequently visited this camp.



5 Sarjal/Tehra Kalan Camp, Sialkot

Located about 6 km from the international border opposite Samba-Kathua, the facility is the main launching site of JeM for infiltration of terrorists into J&K. It is located in the Shakargarh Tehsil of Narowal district in Punjab, Pakistan.

5 Abbas Camp, Kotli

The nerve centre for training of suicide bombers of LeT is about 13 km from line of control opposite Rajauri. This markaz is 2 km south-east of Kotli military camp. This building can accommodate 100-125 JeM terrorists and 40-50 JeM terrorists are always present on the premises at any point of time.

7 Markaz Tayyaba, Muridke

The 'alma mater' and the most important training centre of LeT located around 25 km from IB. It was the headquarters of Lashka-e-Tayyaba led by Hafiz Syed. Terrorists trained here have also associated with many terrorist attacks, including Mumbai attacks in 2008. Azmal Kasab had confessed o f having received training here.

8 Barnala Camp, Bhimber

Nine km from LoC opposite Rajouri-Poonch Sector is used for providing training to terrorists in weapon handling. It is one of the important markaz of LeT in PoK and is used for infiltration of LeT terrorists and arms and ammunition into the Poonch-Rajouri-Reasi sector. It can accommodate 100-150 terrorists.

9 Mehmoona Joya Camp, Sialkot

A key training facility of Hijbul Mujahideen is located around 12 Km from IB, near Sialkot district of Punjab, Pakistan. It is used for infiltration of HM cadres into Jammu region. Major terrorist attacks, including attack on Pathankot Air Force Base, was planned and directed from this camp. HM cadres are given training for terrorist operations and handling of weapons by the senior commanders at this facility.

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	80,746.78	0.13
Nifty 50	24,414.40	0.14
S&P 500*	5,630.80	0.43
Dollar (₹)	84.82	0.45
Pound Sterling (₹)	113.10	0.59
Euro (₹)	96.33	0.86
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	97,246*245	-0.25
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	61.93	-0.35
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.337	-0.013
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	4.328	0.01

PNB sees Q4 net proift rise 52% to ₹4,567 crore

State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) on Wednesday reported 52 per cent rise in net profit at ₹4,567 crore for March quarter FY25. It had earned a net profit of ₹3,010 crore in the year-ago period. During the quarter, the bank's total income increased to ₹36,705 crore from ₹32,361 crore a year ago, PNB said. Interest income grew to ₹31,989 crore from ₹28,113 crore in fourth quarter of previous financial year.

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Will prescribe tariff levels, concessions, says Trump

Washington, May 7: US President Donald Trump said he would prescribe tariff levels and trade concessions for partners looking to avoid higher duties, appearing to move away from the idea that he would engage in back-and-forth negotiations. "We're going to put very fair numbers down, and we're going to say, here's — what this country, what we want. And congratulations, we have a deal. And they'll either say 'great,' and they'll start shopping, or they'll say, 'not good,'" Trump said Tuesday at the White House as he met with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney. "It'll be a low number. We're not looking to hurt countries," he added.


The meeting comes just a week after the Canadian Liberal Party won an election in which Carney vowed to strengthen his country's economic independence and protect its sovereignty from the US President, who has openly mused about making Canada the 51st state. With Carney, Trump indicated that he would strike a friendlier relationship than the one he had with former PM Justin Trudeau. "There's no reason for us to be subsidising Canada," Trump said. Trump's comments come as US trading partners rush to negotiate with the administration to avoid higher levies. The President had earlier said the first deals could come as soon as this week. But his latest comments indicate he could continue to change his approach, which could further roil financial markets that

HAZE PERSISTS

TRUMP APPLIED tariffs of 10% and 25% to Canada in March, while excluding certain goods covered under the North American trade pact.



WITH CANADIAN PM Mark Carney, Trump indicated that he would strike a friendlier relationship than the one he had with former PM Justin Trudeau.



TRUMP SAID he had already gotten some nations to agree to concessions, saying India had agreed to roll back tariffs on American goods.

Bitcoin rallies 3.2% to \$97,914 on optimism

New York, May 7: Bitcoin rose for a second day as optimism over a potential de-escalation in the US-China tariff standoff bolstered demand for riskier assets. The largest digital asset rose as much as 3.2 per cent to top \$97,714 before paring gains. Ether climbed 4.2 per cent. The rally followed news that US treasury secretary Scott Bessent and trade representative Jamieson Greer will meet with the Chinese government this week in Switzerland, raising hopes that the world's two largest economies can reach an agreement that may ease trade tensions. Digital-asset brokerage FalconX has seen "renewed interest for Bitcoin topside" with the market "appearing optimistic that the trade talks over the weekend will be positive," said Sean McNulty, derivatives trading lead of APAC at the company. Digital-asset investors will also have an eye on US Federal Reserve's action.

people are going to have to pay to shop in the United States." Trump said he had already gotten some nations to agree to concessions, saying India had agreed to roll back tariffs on American goods. — Bloomberg

Sentiment turns positive on India's strikes on Pak

Markets in past have consistently rebound in long term

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MAY 7

The Indian market saw low key volatile moves after an early morning knee jerk reaction to India launching airstrikes on Pakistan's terror camps. Sentiments improved as market participants digested the message sent through air strikes as the day progressed and no further escalations were reported.

Market closed in the green with Sensex gaining 105.71 points or 0.13 per cent at 80,746.78 while Nifty-50 closed 0.14 per cent or 34.80 points up at 24,414.40.

Earlier, in the pre-opening session 9.00 to 9.15 am Sensex and Nifty-50 indicated 692 points and 146.3 points lower from previous close at 79,948 and 24233.30 respectively as buy sell orders were getting matched at respective stock exchanges. But the opening gaps narrowed after early morning jitters when trading started.

"Historically, such episodes trigger market volatility and short-term dips - Kargil War (-4 per cent), Parliament Attack (-3 per cent), Mumbai Attacks (-4 per cent), and Balakot Airstrike (-3 per cent). However, markets have consistently rebounded in the long term. After the Kargil War, the Sensex surged 63 per cent within a year. Post-Parliament Attack, it rose over 20 per cent the following year. Following

LOW VOLATILITY

MARKET CLOSES IN GREEN WITH SENSEX GAINING 105.71 PTS OR 0.13% AT 80,746.78

DEFENCE sector stocks were mixed as focus shifts on them due to tense border situation.

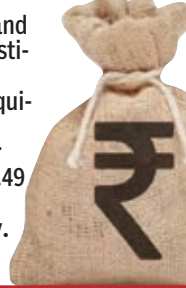
WHILE THE military escalation injects volatility, the impending FTA signals policy stability and global integration. It is essential to differentiate between tactical disruptions and structural shifts.

ANIRUDH GARG, partner & fund manager, Invasset PMS

NIFTY-50 CLOSES 0.14% or 34.80 pts up at 24,414.4

BROADER MARKET outperforms after sharp fall in previous session with BSE mid-cap index up 1.36% and BSE small-cap up 1.16%.

BOTH FIIS and domestic institutions net buyers of equities worth ₹2,585.86 cr and ₹ 2,378.49 crore respectively.



Rupee sheds 38 paise, steepest fall in 1-mth

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, MAY 7

Rupee came under pressure and closed weaker by 38 paise at 84.82 on Wednesday as Indian defence forces conducted targeted strikes at terror hide outs overnight. This was the rupee's steepest decline in one month. The local unit initially opened at 84.63 and appreciated in early deals towards 84.47. Importers, fearing tensions to continue, hedged imports. The local currency unit hit an intra-day low, falling nearly 50 paise

at 84.94 level in afternoon. It recovered some losses by after state-owned banks on behalf of Reserve Bank of India sold dollars. RBI's presence ensured that the rupee stayed in the zone of 84.45 to 84.95 during the day, traders said. Asian currencies were lower on the day. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading higher by 0.23 per cent at 99.46.

WORLD

SHORT TAKES

FINNISH FIGHTER JET CRASHES, PILOT EJECTS

Rovaniemi, Finland, May 7: A Finnish F/A-18 Hornet fighter jet crashed on Wednesday near the Rovaniemi airport in Finland's Arctic north, but the pilot was rescued after ejecting, the armed forces said.

No details were available about the cause of the crash, which occurred "in the Rovaniemi airport area" around 11.00 a.m. (0800 GMT), the military said.

Dark smoke could be seen rising from the scene and several emergency vehicles were dispatched to the area, public service broadcaster YLE said.

RECLAIMING HARBOUR: HK LOOSENS RULES

Hong Kong, May 7: Hong Kong passed a law on Wednesday that made it easier for the government to create new land through reclamation in the city's famed Victoria Harbour despite objections from environmental activists.

Land reclamation was central to the Chinese city's economic growth for decades but shifting public opinion since the 1990s led to stringent legal rules that required projects to establish an "overriding public need".

Officials called those rules "restrictive" and proposed a bill last year to fast-track smaller projects.

DRONE STRIKE TARGETS NAVY BASE IN SUDAN

Port Sudan, May 7: A drone strike targeted Sudan's biggest naval base on Wednesday, an Army source told AFP, marking the fourth straight day the seat of the Army-backed government has come under attack.

"They (the drones) were met with anti-aircraft missiles," the source said on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to the media. An AFP correspondent reported that a series of explosions and then a cloud of smoke coming from the direction of the Flamingo Base.

Strikes on Gaza school housing displaced, market claim 38 lives

Trump: Only 21 hostages believed to be alive; Hamas commander killed

Cairo, Gaza, Washington, Sidon May 7: Israeli strikes on a school housing displaced families and by a crowded market and restaurant in Gaza City killed at least 38 people on Wednesday, local health authorities said.

Medics said two strikes targeted the Karama School in Tuffah, a suburb of Gaza City, killing 15. Later in the day, an Israeli strike near a restaurant and market in the city killed at least 23 people, including women and children, medics said.

Reuters footage showed wounded men being rushed away on the back of pickups and carts. Ambulances sped down shattered streets and a woman in tears carried a baby away from the scene, with two young children beside her.

An image posted on social media showed what appeared to be a family of three — mother, father and son — lying dead on the street in pools of blood. The young boy was carrying a pink backpack. Reuters could not immediately verify the image that was purportedly from the scene of the Tuffah strike.

There was no immediate Israeli comment.

Two Israeli airstrikes on another school, housing displaced people in Bureij camp in central Gaza, killed at least 33 people, including women and children, on Tuesday, local health authorities said. The Israeli military said it struck "terrorists" operating from a command center in the compound.

The strike smashed classrooms, destroyed furniture and left a large crater in the school campus. On Wednesday, survivors sifted through rubble to look for some of their belongings. "What happened is an earthquake. The Israeli occupation hit a school housing children. They are children," said eyewitness Ali Al-Shagra. He said the school housed 300 families.

President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that three hostages held by Hamas in Gaza have died, leaving



Palestinians collect belongings from a school used as a shelter by displaced residents that was hit twice by Israel, in Gaza Strip's Bureij, on Wednesday.

only 21 believed to be still living. "As of today, it's 21, three have died," Trump said of the hostages being held by Hamas, noting until recently it had been 24 people believed to be living. He did not elaborate on the identities of those now believed to be dead, nor how he had come to learn of their deaths. "There's 21, plus a lot of dead bodies," Trump said. Hamas said one of its commanders was killed in an Israeli strike on the south Lebanon city of Sidon on Wednesday, the latest attack despite a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said the dawn strike killed one person.

Hamas named him as Khaled Ahmed al-Ahmed and said he was on his way to pray. "As we mourn our heroic martyr, we pledge to God Almighty, and then to our people and our nation, to continue on the path of resistance," the group said. "Here is the building; it was razed. We cannot find the gas cylinder, the flour bag we had, the kilo of rice, or the meal we got." — Agencies

Second US warplane falls off aircraft carrier

Washington, May 7: A multi-million-dollar US warplane failed to land on the Harry S. Truman aircraft carrier and plummeted into the Red Sea on Tuesday, the US military said, the second jet lost from the ship in just over a week. The two-seat F/A-18F Super Hornet fighter jet, worth around \$67 million, went overboard after an unsuccessful attempt to slow it down as it landed, the US Central Command said.

A defence official told AFP the hook of the aircraft failed to catch the arresting wire on the aircraft carrier.

"The arrestment failed, causing the aircraft to go overboard," the official said, adding "both aviators safely ejected and were rescued by the search and rescue helicopter." "The aviators were evaluated by medical personnel and assessed to have minor injuries. No

flight deck personnel were injured." It is the second F/A-18 operating off the Truman to be lost in just over a week.

Another jet fell off the same carrier on April 28 in an accident that injured one sailor, and also dragged a tractor that was towing the fighter plane into the sea.

And late last year, a F/A-18 operating off the Truman was lost after it was mistakenly shot down by the USS Gettysburg-guided missile cruiser. Both pilots survived that incident. The Truman is one of two US aircraft carriers operating in the Middle East, where US forces have been hammering Yemen's Huthi rebels with strikes since mid-March in an attempt to end the threat they pose to ships in the region. Mediator Oman said on Tuesday the United States and the Houthis had agreed to a ceasefire.

HOUTHIS TO HIT ISRAELI SHIPS DESPITE US DEAL

Sanaa, May 7: Yemen's Houthi rebels will continue targeting Israeli ships in the Red Sea, an official told AFP on Wednesday, despite a ceasefire that ended weeks of intense US strikes on the Iran-backed group.

A day after the Houthis agreed to stop firing on ships playing the key trade route off their shores, a senior official told AFP that Israel was excluded from the deal.

"The waterways are safe for all international ships except Israeli ones," Abdulmalik Alejri, a member of the Houthi political bureau, said.

6 NATIONS OF EUROPE AGAINST TERRITORY SHIFT

Madrid, May 7: Six European countries said on Wednesday that they "firmly reject any demographic or territorial change in Gaza" after Israel announced plans to expand its military offensive in the Palestinian territory.

Israel's plan "would mark a new and dangerous escalation" in the war, the foreign ministers of Spain, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway and Slovenia said in a joint statement. Israel has called up tens of thousands of reservists for the planned offensive, which comes after resumed Israeli attacks against militant group Hamas in March ended a two-month truce.

An Israeli military official said the offensive would include the "conquest" of Gaza, holding territory and moving the strip's population south "for their protection". The foreign ministers, who apart from Luxembourg represent countries that have recognised Palestine.

Buddha jewels' auction put off

Hong Kong, May 7: Sotheby's on Wednesday postponed an auction of jewels associated with Buddhas remains after the Indian government opposed the sale and demanded it be halted.

The gems for auction were found buried together in reliquaries with the corporeal relics of the historical Buddha and discovered in northern India in 1898, the auction house said. They dated back to around 240-200 BC, it said.

But India's ministry of culture said in a Facebook post on Tuesday it had issued a legal notice to Sotheby's Hong Kong to demand the immediate halt of the sale, accusing the auction of violating Indian laws, international norms and UN conventions.

In its letter to Sotheby's Hong Kong dated Monday, posted on Facebook, it said the auction involves sacred Buddhist relics that constitute the inalienable religious and cultural heritage of India and the global Buddhist community. It demanded the repatriation of the relics to the Indian government and a public apology from the auction house and Chris Pepp.

Pepp, Pepp is a great-grandson of British William Pepp, who excavated the relics. The Indian government warned in the letter that failure to comply would



This undated photo released by Sotheby's, shows the Pirprahwa Gems of the Historical Buddha.

result in legal actions and public advocacy campaigns highlighting the auction house's role in perpetuating colonial injustice and becoming a party to unethical sale of religious relics.

Sotheby's announced the postponement in a statement on Wednesday, acknowledging the matters raised by the Indian government and saying it was done with the agreement of the consignors.

This will allow for discussions between the parties, and we look forward to sharing any updates as appropriate, it said.

Some of Sotheby's webpages about the auction were no longer available on Wednesday. The Indian ministry of culture said on Facebook on Wednesday it was pleased to inform that the auction was postponed.

LANKAN PREZ PARTY CONTINUES WINNING STREAK IN LOCAL POLLS

Colombo, May 7: The National People's Power led by President Anura Kumara Dissanayake on Wednesday emerged as the largest party in 265 out of 339 local municipal councils across Sri Lanka despite failing to win capital Colombo's body.

However, the National People's Power (NPP) party's ability to form administrations in those 265 bodies is in doubt as the combined opposition groups have more members than NPP in multiple councils, official results issued by the independent election commission has shown. The election com-

mission data showed that the ruling NPP garnered over 4.5 million votes or 43 per cent of the votes, drastically down from the 68 per cent polled at the parliamentary election held in November last year. It also had a thumping win in the presidential polls prior to that.

The main opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) won just 14 of the 339 councils earning 21 per cent vote. More than 70 per cent of the registered voters exercised their franchise on Tuesday in the local council polls, which were postponed in 2023.

THE ASIAN AGE

8 MAY 2025

As India strikes Pak terror, be ready to face escalation

India is at war — against Pakistan-based terror. The country took its operations against sponsored terror up several notches by striking out at the infrastructure of groups like Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and Jaish-e-Mohammad at nine sites in PoK and in the Pakistani heartland of Punjab in places like Bahawalpur that housed the HQ of the notorious JeM, led by Masood Azhar.

Operation Sindoor, as it was emotionally titled in response to the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 civilians lost their lives, was of a different calibre altogether. Earlier surgical-strike responses to terror attacks in Kashmir in 2016 and 2019 were limited actions in PoK. India’s military operation in the early hours of May 7 is symbolic of the highest capabilities of the combined forces in carrying out targeted strikes.

The act of coordinated strikes named Operation Sindoor was “measured, non-escalatory and proportionate”, according to the official statement of the foreign secretary. And yet even a diehard optimist will not imagine that this will follow the pattern of previous strikes of non-escalatory tit-for-tat military manoeuvres since there is every likelihood of Pakistan responding with force.

To be prepared for any eventuality is India’s lot now even if its expansive action was precise with the employment of high-accuracy standoff weapons expertly guided to ensure the least possible collateral damage at nine locations, four in the Punjab and five in PoK. At least half a dozen civilian deaths were reported while the number of terrorists eliminated may have been, according to reports, 10 times higher.

Even so, Pakistan’s immediate response at dawn on Wednesday was to pepper Kashmir with more of the indiscriminate artillery shelling of the last several days since the diplomatic standoff saw many restrictive measures introduced by both countries. More than nine may have been killed in the shelling and several more injured in villages along the LOC and the International Border.

Considering the loss of lives of innocent villagers, the stark truth is India is also at war now with Pakistan. The neighbour may have been playing games in making sure the count was 26 in India’s Operation Sindoor that equates it with the Pahalgam deaths. But it was not the number so much as the religious discrimination and the manner of hits at innocent tourists in Kashmir that so incensed India to retaliate as it did.

The approbation from a population of 140 crore people, who will see Operation Sindoor as not just revenge but a lesson with a message that Pakistan cannot afford to ignore, is to be savoured by the nation. The strategically well thought out military strike has elicited praise while the briefing by the spokespersons chosen from the armed forces in two women officers was well-directed and free of clutter.

This might, however, mean that the nation must be prepared for anything that a religiously indoctrinated general leading the Pakistan army might see as his “proportionate” response to the strike deep inside Pakistan territory as in Bahawalpur that is 100 km from the border even as the Shehbaz Sharif government is itching for retaliation.

The strangest part is Pakistan’s denials of complicity in the Pahalgam attack have been feeble even as the Western world accepted India’s charge of a direct Pakistan hand in guiding the terror attacks on Kashmir, including through Pakistani nationals handled from there.

It should have come as no surprise that China has been one of the few nations to stand behind Pakistan. If anyone can dissuade Pakistan from this path of directing terror at Kashmir as well as de-escalate at this point of extreme tensions post-Pahalgam attack and the Operation Sindoori response, it is the Chinese leadership. Truth to tell, both nations have only lost in the several wars fought since 1947.

Judges’ assets: SC sets example

The judiciary may be the weakest of the pillars of democracy if one were to assess them by the people and the machinery at their command but it gains its strength from the moral high ground it has claimed for itself. There are many elements that sustains this place which include the fairness with which it handles matters, the impartiality it demonstrates when called on to adjudicate on complex matters and the transparency with which the institution works. The latest decision of the Supreme Court of India to place the annual statement of assets it received on its website for public perusal is a landmark that will add to the glory of the institution.

As it stands today, the asset statements of 21 of the 33 judges of the Supreme Court have been published in the statement and those of the other judges will also be published as they are filed, as per the Supreme Court. The process will reach its logical end when the other judges as well as those in the high courts also follow in their footsteps and declare their assets for the public to view. At some point, it may be extended to the lower judiciary, too.

There have been allegations of corruption against the judiciary at all levels, and they were raised by members of the legal fraternity itself. A judge of the Supreme Court is on record saying half of all judges in the higher judiciary are corrupt and surveys have pointed to people’s low esteem for the judiciary when it comes to probity. It is not that the judges do not know that they have been hit with muck but there have been no serious attempts to correct the wrong. The publication of the assets of the members of the highest court of the land may be seen as the first step towards cleaning that mess.

THE ASIAN AGE

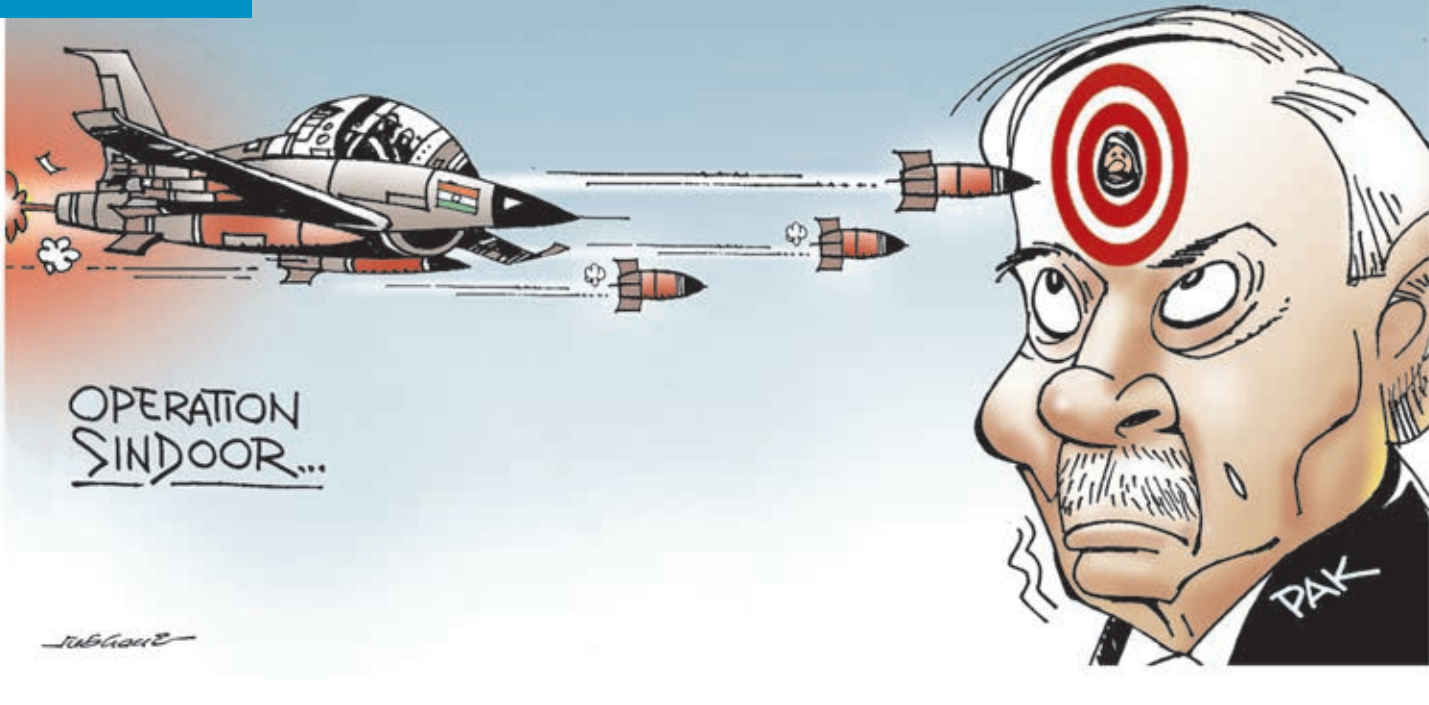
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K. SUDHAKAR
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Subhani



Precision strike effective way to keep Pak in check



Syed Ata Hasnain

On Wednesday, May 7, the nation woke up to what it was expecting for quite some time, a surgical strike of a different kind; without crossing the borders anywhere, a technical strike with precision involving all three branches of the armed forces. After the gruesome terrorist attack in Pahalgam, public sentiment against Pakistan had risen sky high. Although the government’s decisions taken during the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) on April 23 were considered adequate in many ways, it was always perceived that the CCS created for the armed forces a window of opportunity in which to prepare and strike. The strikes were well timed and effectively choreographed with this time, given our advanced technological capability it was important to go just beyond strategic messaging and actually look towards delivering deterrence. Nine locations were selected with great care, both in PoJK and in Punjab, the heartland of Pakistan. Since the NIA has in its preliminary report clearly indicated the coterie of the Pakistan Army, the ISI and the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, it was important that not just targets in PoK were chosen but in Punjab too. Muridke, the Lashkar headquarters, 40 km from Lahore; Bahawalpur, the Jaish HQ; and Sialkot (Mehmooona Joya camp, where the Pathankot attack was planned); were all struck through smart loiter munitions launched by different platforms from land, sea and air, with enough precision in order to avoid collateral damage. These are all facilities located close to prominent Pakistan Army stations, so

details deserve a professional analysis. It’s the first time that all three wings of the armed forces used their respective technological expertise and resources to deliver retribution on the agents of terror in a most effective way.

Apart from the physicality of the action it carried, there were several other issues involved here. I always had self-doubt on our capability to execute precision strikes on targets of choice. Both Muridke and Bahawalpur are inside built-up areas and it is always risky to undertake strikes against such locations for fear of civilian casualties; after all, India has qualms for human rights and human lives, unlike the Pakistan leadership and especially the “Deep State”. In 2016 and 2019 we desisted from targeting these locations but this time, given our advanced technological capability it was important to go just beyond strategic messaging and actually look towards delivering deterrence. Nine locations were selected with great care, both in PoJK and in Punjab, the heartland of Pakistan. Since the NIA has in its preliminary report clearly indicated the coterie of the Pakistan Army, the ISI and the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, it was important that not just targets in PoK were chosen but in Punjab too. Muridke, the Lashkar headquarters, 40 km from Lahore; Bahawalpur, the Jaish HQ; and Sialkot (Mehmooona Joya camp, where the Pathankot attack was planned); were all struck through smart loiter munitions launched by different platforms from land, sea and air, with enough precision in order to avoid collateral damage. These are all facilities located close to prominent Pakistan Army stations, so

Pakistan has in its very usual way responded with a slew of fake news as the Inter Service Public Relations (ISPR) wing wrestles with perception management of the effective precision strikes by India

the message of capability was not lost.

The locations in PoJK were chosen across a wide swathe of the frontage and based upon intelligence inputs. Many of these may have been vacated due to the expectation of a strike, but nevertheless the strike is valuable to the extent that we can always strike the next time without the trigger of an act, such as the Pahalgam attack. In that case, the surprise factor will be high and the effect even higher.

The damage assessment will tell us much, but to my mind it’s the action and not the effect that is important. This can be repeated at any time when there is suspicion of an impending terrorist action. What India has done is to establish a precedent for such action without a trigger. The important issue is that no Pakistan military facility or establishment has been targeted; that would have resulted in an immediate response and therefore the escalation would have been imminent. In the incumbent situation, escalation control has been factored in effectively and the options for the future have also been created.

Pakistan has in its very usual way responded with a slew of fake news as the Inter Service Public Relations (ISPR) wing wrestles with perception management of the effective precision strikes by India. A matching response is not possible as India has no terrorist bases which Pakistan could target. However, Pakistan has chosen to up the ante with the activation of the Line of Control in both the Kashmir and the Jammu sectors. For the last fort-

night, there has been regular exchange of fire of small arms and other flat trajectory weapons in the Tangdhar, Uri, Poonch and Rajouri sectors. That has now been ratcheted to artillery and mortar fire with a large number of civilian casualties on our side, for which Pakistan has no regret. It is Pakistan’s way of expressing its frustration. What cannot be ruled out is a resort to another sub-conventional action in J&K over the next few days to once again challenge India. That is because the extension of any sense of proportion and rationalism to Pakistan’s actions cannot be expected. If that were to happen, India should keep its arsenal dry for an immediate response, this time without awaiting any preparedness.

The international factor is of importance here. We have to bring international opinion on a focus towards the condemnation of Pakistan and declare it a state sponsoring trans-border terrorism. With the World Bank’s Financial Action Task Force (FATF) we had succeeded in calling out Pakistan; that campaign had effectively forced Pakistan’s hand to a limited extent. Pakistan needs to be placed on the “black list” of the FATF and its loans, etc. for which it aspires should be held back subject to its international behavior. India has probably accepted many advisories from the United States regarding escalation and rightly adhered to these. It’s now time to raise the issue with not only the US but also several other powers, including the influential Middle Eastern countries with whom India has a higher grade of relationship. The military response is only a one-time measure, although it sends a huge message, but the lasting effect will be of continuing diplomacy to bring Pakistan to be recognised internationally as a pariah state.

The writer, a retired lieutenant-general, is a former GOC of the Srinagar-based 15 (“Chinar”) Corps

LETTERS

BUFFETT ERA ENDS

Warren Buffett’s retirement marks the end of a legendary era in investing, during which he led Berkshire Hathaway to deliver extraordinary returns. At 94, Buffett remains sharp, but the loss of his longtime partner Charlie Munger likely influenced his decision to step back. Vice-chairmen Greg Abel and Ajit Jain will now lead the company, which has grown from a failing textile firm into a \$1.2 trillion giant with vast investments and a \$348 billion cash reserve. Buffett’s legacy lies in his disciplined, value-oriented investment philosophy, shaped by Benjamin Graham, and his unmatched ability to spot long-term growth in under-standable businesses. His successors are expected to preserve this philosophy.

Amarjeet Kumar
Hazaribagh

PORT GAME CHANGER

THE VIZHINJAM international seaport in Kerala, India’s first deep-water container transshipment port, has formally commenced operations. The port is funded by the government of Kerala (61.5 pc), the concessionaire Adani Vizhinjam Port (28.9 pc) and the Government of India loan (9.6 pc). Vizhinjam has been a centre of maritime trade since ancient times. Some scholars suggest the coastal town of Balita is likely Vizhinjam. Texts from the Sangam-era are said to contain references to the existence of a fort and a port in this location. The tranquil beach with its unique geological features like the “swallowed shore” and the rock-cut cave temple there are notable. Vizhinjam is a gift of nature to God’s Own Country.

Haridasan Rajan
Kozhikode

PROACTIVE STEP

THE SUPREME COURT of India must be lauded for publishing the assets of certain judges, including that of the CJI, in the court’s website. The initiative marks a significant departure from past practices and reflects a growing commitment to openness and accountability. The move comes amid growing public concern over the judiciary’s opacity, especially following a controversy involving burnt currency notes found at the residence of a Delhi high court judge. The SC has thus taken a proactive step to address such concerns.

R. Sivakumar
Chennai

Pradeep
C. Nair



Violence down in Manipur after Prez Rule, but still a long way to go

May 3, 2025 marked two years since the outbreak of violence in Manipur between Meiteis and Kukis, in which 258 people were killed, 60,000 internally displaced, and about 5,000 houses and 400 religious structures destroyed in the mayhem. There has been a lot of focus on the causes of the violence, the events that sparked the disturbances, the remedies and what the future portends for Manipur. But there have also been positives which haven’t been reported much in the national media. Manipur has changed immensely in these two years, but all is not lost yet.

The second anniversary of the outbreak has seen less violence, killings, bomb blasts, grenade attacks, sounds of bullets, and it is necessary to know about these. Three major changes that happened at the beginning of the year have gradually and surely put the state on the path to normalcy. The first was the choice of Ajay Kumar Bhalla, a former Union home secretary, as the new governor on January 3, the second was the resignation of chief minister N. Biren Singh on February 9, and the third the imposition of President’s Rule on February 13. The new governor, with first-hand experience of handling the Manipur crisis as home secretary, got down to business as soon as he took over. He visited the camps of the internally displaced people of both groups, gave them his assurances, met up with multiple civil society organisations, women’s organisations (all of which were received very well), and has constantly empha-

sised upon them to abhor violence, besides addressing governance matters, including security. He has stood firm on his directions of “peace ought to precede a political solution” as against the constant refrain of “no peace without a solution” that was being insisted upon by the warring groups.

The overall law and order situation has seen a change. Violence and insurgency related activities have declined and inter-community clashes had also almost ended. After the governor’s announcement that all weapons must be surrendered, 1,044 weapons (official figure) have been surrendered. In the meantime, concerted efforts by the security forces continue in the state to de-weaponise society. The activities of gun-toting private militias, like the Arambai Tengol in the Imphal Valley and the Kuki gunmen in the hills, have been significantly checked by the security forces. Targeted violence, that included extortion, kidnappings, grenade attacks and other forms of intimidation, have also seen an immense decline. All these have given the common man a sense of relief and security. Road blockades cum checkpoints that had been established by the warring groups had affected the state’s economy, besides impacting the sustenance of ordinary citizens. This has now been addressed by the security forces.

Here, mention must be made of the Committee on Tribal Unity (COTU)-led blockade in Kangpokpi that was demolished by the security forces on February 27, which restored arterial access; a very

significant step. Unnoticed has also been the re-opening of highways, whereby movement of commodities along NH-2 and NH-37 has re-commenced, which has brought great succour to the people in both the hills and valley. But passenger travel has not yet started, which eventually will happen once both communities start confidence-building measures. With the opening of highways, economic activities that include trade and agriculture have also got a fillip. Of particular significance is the resumption of cultivation by farmers, almost impossible during this period last year and the year before, at this time. In all of this, business activities are also gradually limping back to normalcy.

The USP of Manipur has always been its cultural diversity and the numerous festivals that are celebrated. Ningol Chakkouba, Yaoshang, Cherioba, Thabal Chonga (Meitei festivals), Chavang Kut (Kuki festival), Lui-Ngai-Ni (Naga festival), besides Christmas and Easter (for the Kukis and Nagas) have all been celebrated in the past few months with great zeal and fervour, thereby showcasing the aspirations of society at large, to return to normalcy. Of course, it is still a far cry from what existed earlier, where, in all these festivals, people of all the communities (Meiteis, Nagas and Kukis) would celebrate jointly. It is pertinent to mention here that eventually, that too is something that is not impossible, looking ahead.

A major concern all along has been the re-settlement of the IDPs. It has been a compelling but challenging necessity; however, it is essential to know

that an initial resettlement has commenced in villages like Waraioiching, Manamjang and Haibung in Senapati district and L. Thingliphai near Sugnu (Kakching district); which has set the stage for wider rehabilitation. Alongside, what has gone unnoticed is that a dialogue has been initiated between both communities which was held on April 5. While the outcome of the talks itself is not known, it is prudent to understand that at this stage, it is not necessary to know about the outcome either, given the sharp divide that exists between the two communities and given that the holding of a dialogue the two sides was being thought of as an impossibility just a few months ago.

A lot of criticism has happened in the media over the past two years, which has not only polarised both the communities, but in a broader sense has laid the field bare for interference and indulgences by countries and powers that are inimical to the interests of the Northeast in particular and India at large. The solution to the problem largely rests with the communities that are at loggerheads (by talks and meetings), besides unbiased governance (which, at the moment, appears to be happening). The security forces in the state have been the silent work force behind the baby steps towards normalcy. President’s Rule, though not a permanent solution, has surely helped the state at this juncture.

The writer is a retired lieutenant-general who is a former director-general of the Assam Rifles and has extensively served in the Northeast

ORANGE	PURPLE
<div></div> <div>Suryakumar Yadav, MI</div> <div>510</div>	<div></div> <div>Prasidh Krishna, GT</div> <div>20</div>
<div>Sudarshan Sai, GT</div> <div>509</div>	<div>Noor Ahmad, CSK</div> <div>20</div>
<div>Shubman Gill, GT</div> <div>508</div>	<div>Hazlewood, RCB</div> <div>18</div>

short takes

INDIANS IN FINAL AFTER WIN OVER S. AFRICANS

Colombo, May 7: Riding on Jemimah Rodrigues' career-best century and half-tons from opener Smriti Mandhana and Deepti Sharma, India defeated a fighting South Africa by 23 runs to set up a title clash with Sri Lanka in the women's Tri-Nation ODI series here on Wednesday.

Rodrigues' blazing 123 off 101 balls, laced with 15 fours and a six, saw India post a huge 337 for 9 before the bowlers, led by pacer seamer Amanjot Kaur (3/59) and off-spinner Deepti Sharma (2/57) restricted the opponents to 314/7. This despite Annerie Dercksen's fine 81-run knock and stand-in skipper Chloe Tryon's 67.

India ended their round-robin phase with six points from four games. Sri Lanka, on the other hand, have four points from three games and could garner two more points if they beat South Africa on Friday. South Africa, after losing three consecutive games, are out of contention even though they have a match to go against Sri Lanka on Friday.

PTI Brief scores: India: 337/9 in 50 overs (Jemimah Rodrigues 123, Deepti Sharma 93, Smriti Mandhana 51) beat South Africa 314/7 in 50 overs (Annerie Dercksen 81, Chloe Tryon 67, Amanjot Kaur 3/59)

INDIA ARCHERY TEAMS IN WORLD CUP FINALS

Shanghai, May 7: The Indian men's and women's compound archery teams moved into the finals of the World Cup Stage 2 with commanding performances here on Wednesday, assuring the country of two medals from the prestigious event.

The No 1-ranked men's team of Ojas Deotale, Abhishek Verma and Rishabh Yadav easily defeated Great Britain 239-232 in the quarter-final before overcoming a strong challenge from Denmark 232-231.

In the women's compound section, the top ranked India team comprising Madhura Dhamangaonkar, Chikitha Taniparthi and Jyothi Surekha Vennam overcame Kazakhstan in the quarterfinals, before defeating Great Britain in last-four to also seal a title clash with Mexico.

Both the gold-medal matches against Mexico will take place on Saturday.

— PTI

ARCHERS SEND MAHA TO TOP OF KIYG TABLE

Patna, May 7: Maharashtra regained the top spot in the Khelo India Youth Games medal tally on Wednesday with a sweep of the six archery gold medals on offer which helped them counter Rajasthan's surge through a four-gold haul at the Yamuna Velodrome in the Indira Gandhi Indoor Complex in New Delhi.

Maharashtra's gold rush was also aided by Vedant Waghmare, who won the boys' 50m Rifle 3 Positions shooting event at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range.

Another win in the boys 4x100m medley in the swimming event in Gaya saw Maharashtra's gold medals' haul increase to 14. It also has 12 silver and 12 bronze medals.

Harshita Jakhar was in the forefront for Rajasthan as its cyclist bagged all the four golds on Wednesday. Rajasthan was perched in the second spot.

— PTI

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DARK KNIGHT

KKR virtually out of Playoffs after losing to CSK

Kolkata, May 7: Chennai Super Kings beat Kolkata Knight Riders by two wickets to send the defending champions virtually out of the IPL play-offs contention here on Wednesday. CSK chased down the target of 180 with two balls to spare with Dewald Brevis top-scoring with 52 off just 25 balls while Shivam Dube and captain M. S. Dhoni chipped in with 45 and 17 not out respectively.

For KKR, Vaibhav Arora (3/48) was the most successful bowler while Harshit Rana (2/43) and Varun Chakaravarthy (2/18) took two wickets apiece.

Earlier, left-arm wrist spinner Noor Ahmad exploited the turning conditions brilliantly, picking up 4/31, to restrict Kolkata Knight Riders to 179 for 6, as Chennai Super Kings' spin trio dominated the middle overs. After cruising at 67/1 at the power-play, KKR choked with Ahmad turning the tide.

The Afghan spinner broke KKR's rhythm immediately after the powerplay, striking twice in one over.

First, he dismissed Narine (26 off 17 balls; 4x4, 1x6), beaten in flight and stumped brilliantly by M. S. Dhoni. Four balls later, Angkrish Raghuvanshi edged behind to give CSK a double breakthrough.

KKR lost further momentum as the boundaries dried up — at one stage, they went 24 balls without a single four — in the middle overs. Their hopes rested on Andre Russell, fresh from a match-winning fifty in the previous game.

The explosive Jamaican shifted gears, smashing Ravindra Jadeja for two fours and a six, and then launched Ahmad into the stands with a massive six off a googly. But Ahmad had the last laugh, deceiving Russell (38 off 21 balls) with another well-disguised googly to end his dangerous knock.

In his final over, Ahmad also removed Rinku Singh, wrapping up a terrific spell that broke KKR's backbone.

From 67/1 in six overs, KKR managed just 112 runs in the next 14 overs.

— PTI



Chennai Super Kings spinner Noor Ahmad (left) celebrates with teammates after dismissing Kolkata Knight Riders batter Andre Russell during their Indian Premier League match at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Wednesday.

SCOREBOARD

Kolkata Knight Riders: Rahmanullah Gurbaz c Noor Ahmad b Anshul Kamboj 11, Sunil Narine st Dhoni b Noor Ahmad 26, Ajinkya Rahane c Conway b Ravindra Jadeja 48, Angkrish Raghuvanshi c Dhoni b Noor Ahmad 1, Manish Pandey not out 36, Andre Russell c Dewald Brevis b Noor Ahmad 38, Rinku Singh c Ayush Mhatre b Noor Ahmad 9, Ramandeep Singh not out 4, Extras (lb-4, w-2) 6. **Total (for 6 wickets in 20 overs) 179.**

Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-69, 3-71, 4-103, 5-149, 6-167.

Bowling: Khaleel Ahmed 2-0-14-0, Anshul Kamboj 3-0-38-1, Ravichandran Ashwin 3-0-19-0, Noor Ahmad 4-0-31-4, Ravindra Jadeja 4-0-34-1, Matheesha Pathirana 4-0-39-0.

Chennai Super Kings: Ayush Mhatre c Harshit Rana b Arora 0, Devon Conway b Ali 0, Urvil Patel c Varun b Harshit Rana 31, Ravichandran Ashwin c Raghuvanshi b Harshit Rana 8, Ravindra Jadeja b Varun 19, Dewald Brevis c Singh b Varun 52, Shivam Dube c Singh b Arora 45, M. S. Dhoni not out 17, Noor Ahmad c Singh b Arora 2, Anshul Kamboj not out 4. Extras (lb-1, w-4) 5. **Total (for 8 wickets in 19.4 overs) 183.**

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-25, 3-37, 4-56, 5-60, 6-127, 7-170, 8-172.

Bowling: Vaibhav Arora 3-0-48-3, Moeen Ali 2-0-23-1, Harshit Rana 4-0-43-2, Varun Chakaravarthy 4-0-18-2, Sunil Narine 4-0-28-0, Andre Russell 2.4-0-22-0.

Rohit to retire from Test cricket

New Delhi, May 7: Rohit Sharma on Wednesday announced his retirement from Test cricket with immediate effect ending all speculations about his future in the longest format. The 38-year-old was India's most prolific Test batter in the second half of his career, scoring 4301 runs in 67 Tests with 12 hundreds and 18 half centuries at an average of 40.57.

Having already retired from T20 Internationals after the World Cup last year, Rohit will now only be seen in the ODI format for India.

"Hello everyone, I would just like to share that I am retiring from Test cricket.



It's been an absolute honour to represent my country in whites.

"Thank you for all the love and support over the years. I will continue to represent India in the ODI format," he posted on instagram with a picture of his Test cap.

Rohit captained India to the World Test Championship final against Australia and save the last couple of indifferent series against New Zealand at home and the Border-Gavaskar series against Australia.

India will have a new Test captain for the five-Test series in England with possible candidates being Jasprit Bumrah, K. L. Rahul, Shubman Gill and Rishabh Pant.

Rohit endured a particularly difficult run during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy where he had to drop himself from the playing XI owing to poor form but he had ruled out retirement at that stage.

There was also widespread speculation about his differences with Head Coach Gautam Gambhir, who had vowed to end the "star culture" in Indian cricket after taking charge last year in July.

— PTI

Frattesi shoots Inter into CL final

Milan (Italy), May 7: Davide Frattesi fired Inter Milan into the Champions League final on Tuesday with an extra-time winner which gave the Italians a stunning 4-3 triumph over Barcelona, 7-6 on aggregate.

Italy midfielder Frattesi won a tie for the ages under a downpour in Milan when he lashed home in the 99th minute after great play from Marcus Thuram, sending a packed and rocking San Siro wild with joy.

Simone Inzaghi's team will face either Arsenal or Paris Saint-Germain at the end of this month in Munich, where they will feel they have a great chance to be crowned kings of Europe for a fourth time after coming out on top in an epic contest.

Frattesi has become something of a super-sub for Inter and he struck late just as he did in the first leg of his team's quarter-final win over Bayern Munich.

"It's just incredible, I don't know what to say. I thought after the Bayern game I couldn't ever feel the same emotions, but tonight was even more incredible," Frattesi told



Inter Milan's Davide Frattesi (right) scores against Barcelona during their Champions League semifinal second leg match in Milan, Italy, on Tuesday.

SEMIFINAL (SECOND LEG)	
Inter Milan (Martinez 21, Calhanoglu 45-penalty, Acerbi 90+3, Frattesi 99)	4
Barcelona (Garcia 54, Olmo 60, Raphinha 87) after extra time	3
Inter Milan win 7-6 on aggregate	

broadcaster Sky Sports.

Tuesday's triumph saved Inter's season as their bid for the treble went up in smoke after getting past Bayern.

Inter conceded top spot in Serie 'A' to Napoli, who

are favourites to claim the domestic league title, while AC Milan dumped them out of the Italian Cup.

But Inter ended Barca's hopes for the quadruple and head into the final weeks of the season buoyant with a second Champions League final in three seasons to look forward to.

— AFP

MI-PUNJAB TIE IN DHARAMSALA MAY SHIFT TO MUMBAI

New Delhi/ Dharamsala, May 7: The IPL match between Mumbai Indians and Punjab Kings to be held on Sunday in Dharamsala is set to be shifted to Mumbai after travel plans of the teams were thrown haywire following the temporary closure of the hill town's airport.

"There is high possibility that the match will be shifted to Mumbai in case the airport remains shut," a BCCI source said.

Dharamsala is due to host the Punjab Kings vs Delhi Capitals clash on Thursday and that game will go ahead as scheduled given that both teams have touched base.

"We have not got any written intimation from either the BCCI, or the central and state governments about cancellation of tomorrow's match. Unless there is any official instruction, we are going ahead with the schedule," a Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association source said.

— PTI

POINTS TABLE						
Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Points	Net RR
GT	11	8	3	0	16	+0.793
RCB	11	8	3	0	16	+0.482
PBKS	11	7	3	1	15	+0.376
MI	12	7	5	0	14	+1.156
DC	11	6	4	1	13	+0.362
KKR	12	5	6	1	11	+0.193
LSG	11	5	6	0	10	-0.469
SRH (E)	11	3	7	1	7	-1.192
RR (E)	12	3	9	0	6	-0.718
CSK (E)	12	3	9	0	6	-0.992

E — Eliminated from Playoff contention

DC face Punjab in must-win tie

Dharamsala, May 7: Delhi Capitals will be desperate to arrest their slump and stay in contention for the playoffs when they take on a high-flying Punjab Kings in a crucial IPL match here on Thursday. DC have endured three losses and a no result due to rain in their last five games, and are currently placed fifth on the table with 13 points from 11 matches.

The Axar Patel-led side had a disappointing time at home, managing just one win — that too via a Super Over — at the Arun Jaitley Stadium.

A team that won its first four matches would have hoped that a change of venue would bring a change in fortune, but DC's batting unit disintegrated against Sunrisers Hyderabad before rain washed out the contest.

It was a complete top order collapse as Capitals lost half their side for 29.

DC's top order has looked vulnerable. Karun Nair's promotion as an opener in the last game backfired as he was dismissed for a duck, while South African stalwart Faf du Plessis, who

IPL 2025 Match: 58	
May 8, 7:30 pm HPCA Stadium, Dharamsala	
Punjab Kings	Delhi Capitals
Overall in IPL	
257	Played 263
119	Won 121
137	Lost 139
1	No Result 3
262/2	Highest Total 257/4
Head-to-Head in IPL	
Matches played: 33	
PBKS won: 17	DC won: 16

seemed to have returned to form, also perished early trying to force a bowler-friendly pitch.

Punjab Kings, on the other hand, have been sensational this season, winning seven and losing just three of their 11 matches to sit just outside the top two in the standings.

— PTI

WHAT THEY SAID

INDIAN SPORTING FRATERNITY REACTS TO ARMY'S OPERATION SINDOOR

Fearless in unity. Boundless in strength. India's shield is her people. There's no room for terrorism in this world. We're ONE TEAM! Jai Hind.

— Sachin Tendulkar
cricket legend

The Indian Armed Forces turned adversity into a powerful Fateh moment. Their courage and valor in the face of danger have made us all proud. Jai hind.

— Mohammed Shami
Indian fast bowler

There is no place for terrorism in India and in the World. Our soldiers don't make threats, they take action. Operation Sindoor is a testament to heroes who speak only the language of courage.

— Nikhat Zareen
World champion boxer

There is no place for terrorism in India and in the World.

— P. T. Usha
IOA President

The Indian Army is giving a befitting reply to the terrorist attacks on the country by putting its life at stake. I salute your passion and bravery in this fight for the protection of Mother India and the safety and peace of all of us. I pray to God to protect you at every step and give you victory soon.

— Vinesh Phogat
Former wrestler and Congress leader

Agar koi aap par patthar phenke toh uspar Phool Phenko, Lekin Gamle ke saath (If someone throws stones at you then respond with flowers but not without the pots they are planted in). Jai Hind.

— Virender Sehwag
Former cricketer

I am glad India responded firmly with Operation Sindoor after the horrific Pahalgam attack. Terrorism must never go unanswered. And what a beautiful name for the operation. Bharat Mata Ki Jai!

— Vidith Gujrathi
Chess player